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Published in:
International Journal of Heritage Studies

DOI:
10.1080/13527258.2017.1422000

Published: 03/04/2019

Document Version
Peer reviewed version

Problematizing Silences in Intangible Heritage: Unsettling Historical Records of Women in Protests

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Wordcount: 8,325 – not including first page, abstract, keywords, but including all footnotes, captions, and references.

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses questions of women's visibility in constructed histories, as well as levels of recognition concerning their participation in politics through historical narratives. In particular, historical narratives representing women in protest in the context of waterfront heritage zones associated with the shipbuilding industry are examined, based on examples of two public art projects: *Strong Women of the Clydeside: Protests and Suffragettes* from *Govan's Hidden Histories* led by the artist t s Beall in the Govan area of Glasgow, Scotland and *Shipyard is a Woman* by Arteria Association and Metropolitanka in Gdansk, Poland.

Keywords: intangible heritage; gender; women's history; public art; performance; regeneration; protests

Introduction

> 'What is omitted from the past reveals as much about a culture as what is recorded as history and circulates as collective memory' (Staniszewski 1998, xxi).

The point of departure for this paper is the ongoing debate around the need for the reconceptualisation of heritage as a process (Duncan 1996, Kirshenblatt-Gimblet 1998, Gurian 2006, Smith 2006, Andermann and Arnold-de Simine 2012). We are sympathetic to this trend as it emphasises the possibilities of co-existence of multiple narratives (Smith, 2006). Heritage framed as a process enables much needed critique with regard to the sidelining and silencing of some voices while privileging others. Heritage constructed, for example, as a process of cultural engagement (Jackson and Kidd 2011), or as an action around communication and meaning making (Smith, 2006) can be framed as a site of struggle. At the same time, heritage can be conceptualised as

a medium for the transformation of recorded histories, whereby parallel, contradictory, or even contested narratives are simultaneously at play.

As heritage narratives become a site of struggle and transformation around meaning-making, it seems appropriate to emphasise the importance of a particular sphere in the construction of heritage discourses and processes of memorisation. In *Practice of Everyday Life,* Michel de Certeau (1984) discusses ways in which people individualize culture by altering things in order to make them their own, from utilitarian objects to more tacit effects, performances and rituals, established laws, and through language. De Certeau (1984) sees in the activity of re-use an abundance of opportunities that can subvert the rituals and representations that institutions seek to impose upon individuals and groups through dominant discourse. Beyond a reception of culture, following de Certeau (1984), a cultural sign can be re-appropriated, resulting in its alternative use and contributing to the possible reconstruction of heritage discourses. Such processes reflect the ways in which artists, for instance, can re-appropriate traditions, language and cultural symbols in and through everyday situations.

In this paper, the political articulation of artistic practice is made in reference to women's visibility in history. Political articulation, however, is not only associated with practicing politics with a capital 'P', through access to parliamentary debates or development of policy, although gendered occupation of such spheres is important. What is essential in addressing the problems associated with women's visibility within historical records is bringing to the foreground the method that embraces small 'p' politics – a praxis that engages in everyday struggle. Jacques Ranciere's (1998) definition of the political can be understood as a terrain upon which verification of equality confronts the established order of identification and classification. For the processes of identification and classification, we approach identity as a construction

tenuously constituted in time, following Judith Butler, as 'instituted through a stylised repetition of acts' (1988, 519). Such a definition of political engagement articulates well feminist-inspired methodological framing of this paper, shedding light on everyday tactics as alternative forms of engagement with institutions and local communities, in reflecting on possible revisions of historical narratives.[1]

Kosmala (2014) has argued that a reframing of the socio-political reality along with a morphing of European spaces has resulted in yet another remobilisation of feminist politics in the new millennium. In this current remobilisation, multiple versions of histories and their fragments are now being re-written, strengthening critical discourse in contemporary art practice and cultural production. This is a discourse based on the infusion of feminist critique into broader discourses, embracing a wider contextualisation of a gender-language-politics triad. To clarify, the feminist-inspired methodology adopted in this paper emerges from a position of marginality and embraces everyday tactics as part of an overarching aim to challenge gender-centered inequalities and on-going forms of socio-political oppression which continue to be channeled and perpetuated through language. Hence, our methodological framing alludes to the importance of the intersectional analysis of discrimination, and an acknowledgement of the intersectional turn in feminist-inspired scholarship (Lykke 2012; Carbin and Edenheim 2013).[2] This analysis considers gendered power

[1] Andrew Blauvelt (2003), referring to Michel de Certeau, argues that tactics, as opposed to strategies, are particularly employed by the subjugated. Thus by their very nature tactics are 'defensive' and opportunistic, used in more limited ways and seized momentarily, yet produced and governed by more powerful strategic relations.

[2] The authors acknowledge that the expansion of intersectionality has contributed to the concealment of some conflict within feminist research over the last two decades. This argument also alludes to the fact that women's issues have in certain Socialist and trade union contexts (but not only) been sublimated in parallel to class struggle. We argue, however, that various processes of intersection of social exclusion such as gender, class and geo-location/origin are often unproblematised in academic research, and this is an area that merits further research.

differentials as intersecting with other processes of social exclusion, including class and origin.

With this framing, this paper examines two public art-centred projects: *Strong Women of the Clydeside: Protests and Suffragettes* from *Govan's Hidden Histories* led by the artist t s Beall in the Govan area of Glasgow, Scotland; and *Shipyard is a Woman* by Arteria Association and Metropolitanka in Gdansk, Poland. Both projects address questions of women's visibility in the dominant historical narratives of specific political protests, and women's political participation in the context of shipbuilding and waterfront heritage zones. Additionally, both projects mobilise feminist-inspired methodologies for framing intangible cultural heritage with a focus on walking, performativity and embodied experience. As gender identity can be considered a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction, it is in its performativity the possibilities of contesting its reified status reside (Butler 1988, 519-520). Following this line of thought, we argue that walking methodologies can be framed as both performative and discursive, attempting the embodiment of subaltern voices. In both Govan and Gdansk, both projects aim to re-vocalise and resuscitate lost voices, breathing out lost words in the very spaces where they were once heard. Both projects draw on oral histories and interview transcripts conducted within the projects, attending as much as possible to the living accounts of participants and allowing their fresh testimonies to be heard. Additionally, both projects have sought to analyse – and at times contest – existing historical sources. We argue that these projects seek openings in the existing and dominant heritage narratives of women in protests – attributing previously anonymous actions, recovering and recording unheard voices, and honouring women and their contributions. In the process of recovering, recording, and re-voicing, these projects attempt to create more blurred understandings within the construction of

historical accounts of women engaged in political rallies and campaigning of the twentieth century. We argue that these creative works are enacted alongside or 'in-between' dominant heritage narratives, rather than being directly oppositional.

Image 1

Shipyard is a Woman and *Strong Women of Clydeside* project logos
Courtesy of Metropolitanka and t s Beall / *Govan's Hidden Histories*

This paper is structured as follows: Firstly, UNESCO's 2003 initiative for safeguarding intangible heritage and the appropriateness of its articulation in the processes of uncovering lost voices in gendered historical accounts will be addressed. Secondly, intangible cultural heritage will be examined alongside its methodological usefulness for seeking openings in the 'authorised heritage discourse' (Smith 2006, 4), while encouraging engagement with the past in redrafting existing historical narratives. Thirdly, the reframing tactics of the everyday as applied in two creative projects in Scotland and Poland will be examined, including: the resuscitation of sublimated voices, identity correction, honoring, and attribution. All of these tactics highlight the importance of amending or re-visioning the existing historical records, *and* exposing gaps or slippage within dominant heritage discourses. The paper concludes that the feminist-inspired methodologies inherent to both projects – with their methods of unsettling the *status quo* within the historical records of political protests through recovering, mapping and attributing omitted gendered accounts – appear 'under-voiced' themselves, particularly in their conceptualisation of engagement with the 'other' and its gendered nature. What also emerges is a need for dialogue with primary cultural heritage institutions in the projects' prospective localities.

UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage and the Construct of Gender

UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage* (hereafter 'the Convention') concerns the 'practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage' (2003 Article 2.1). The Convention states that intangible cultural heritage (hereafter ICH) is 'transmitted from generation to generation', 'constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment' and their interaction with their history, and 'provides them with a sense of identity' (ibid). The Convention clarifies that ICH 'is manifested in […] oral traditions and expressions; […] performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; […and] traditional craftsmanship' (2003 Article 2.2).

The Convention foregrounds the importance of participation as a human right, and highlights the role of communities in the safeguarding and interpretation of ICH (Blake 2015a). This focus on community participation includes the initial processes of identifying ICH, and raises questions as to how inclusive and grass-roots levels of participation might be incorporated within existing heritage management systems (Blake 2015b). It also raises questions regarding decision making, and whose voices are privileged in the process of identifying and defining cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible (ibid). These processes are undoubtedly influenced by existing biases within local, national, and international heritage discourses (including the omission or sublimation of women's voices), and these biases must be identified as an integral part of any such process. Additionally, it is possible that communities in urban areas could be less well defined and more fluid (Museums Galleries Scotland 2015a), and this is a

further challenge for processes of identifying, documenting, and otherwise safeguarding ICH.[3]

ICH and Embodied Action

The Convention specifically describes intangible heritage as involving embodiment and action: ICH is '*transmitted* from generation to generation', and is '*constantly recreated* by communities and groups in response to their environment' and their interaction with history (UNESCO 2003, Article 2.1, emphasis added). According to Blake, it 'is only through its *enactment* by cultural practitioners that ICH has any current existence and by their *active transmission* that it can have any future existence' (2009, 65, emphasis added). The first of four listed purposes of the Convention is 'to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage' (2003, Article 1A), including the revitalisation of its various aspects. This process of revitalisation necessarily includes the re-invigoration of voices, movements, and histories that may have been underrepresented or undervalued within 'source' or 'bearer communities',[4] or within the dominant cultures that surround them. The Convention specifically suggests that state parties should also endeavour to 'foster [...] artistic studies, as well as research methodologies' (2003, Article 13) and within this framework there is potential for an

[3] The Convention notes that ICH is a powerful tool in the process of the formation of community identity. Blake (2015b) emphasises that communities and individuals must be free to choose multiple identities – to vision themselves within a multiplicity of changing communities – and that the framework of ICH must remain fluid enough to incorporate newer members of a society who chose to self-identify as part of groups or communities to which they might not be considered 'native' (ibid). Communities as defined by the Convention need not be ethnic or geographic but can instead gather around shared interests (ibid). We suggest that the definitions of community employed by the Convention should be further problematised, seeking potential openings for ICH stewardship from 'non native' and/or 'communities of interests'.

[4] The use of 'source' and 'bearer communities' echoes the Convention (2003) and writings of Janet Blake (2015a, 2015c).

expanded sense of intangible heritage, where its safeguarding is visioned to include contemporary artistic responses and socially-engaged practices (Beall 2016).[5]

Intangible Cultural Heritage in the UK and Poland

It remains to be seen how these conceptualisation of ICH might be employed in recovering histories in the UK and Poland. In the UK, the impact of intangible heritage on heritage practice remains limited (Hassard 2009). ICH is largely unrecognised at national policy levels, and the government has yet to ratify the 2003 Convention. Although Poland ratified the Convention in 2011, discourses surrounding intangible heritage have not attracted much attention.

According to Smith and Waterton (2009), intangible heritage is not seen as a priority by many professionals in the heritage sector: '[T]he problems encountered within the UK in terms of the idea of intangibility are not tied up with the existence or relevance of intangible heritage per se, but with the ability of the management process in the UK to comprehend it' (2009, 299). Based on the evidence from interviews with English heritage professionals and reflective commentary from international practitioners, the authors suggest that the dominant conceptualisation of heritage in England is so significantly anchored to the tangible that professionals find the move towards the intangible deeply problematic (ibid). This limited definition of heritage extends predictably into the conceptualisation of post-industrial historical narratives,

[5] Although outside the scope of this paper, it is worth noting that in this the Convention may offer openings for creative and artistic solutions to some of these problems, and that artists and other creative practitioners may have a role to play in specific circumstances regarding the safeguarding of ICH (concerning, for instance, identification or re-creation). This may also include those who are neither 'experts' as defined by UNESCO, nor necessarily seen as being from source, local or bearer communities.

where rituals and traditions related to industry are not seen as valid examples of intangible heritage.[6]

Recent developments in Scotland, however, may provide alternatives. According to Joanne Orr, CEO of Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS):

> The approach to ICH in Scotland is one of inclusivity, which was the starting point for the development of our national inventory website, designed to be a vibrant, living record of ICH practices in Scotland.[7] This […] is now being viewed as best practice (MGS 2015a, 2).

This promoted approach, however, is potentially in contrast to current discourses and practice.[8] How and if the heritage industry across the UK (including Wales and Northern Ireland) or in Poland adapts its practices to include safeguarding intangible heritage is something that is still to be seen.

Because the UK has not signed the Convention, Scotland's intangible cultural heritage is not represented on the related UNESCO heritage lists. An additional challenge is whether ICH is recognised as important within dominant discourses across cultural institutions, and whether systems are being implemented to assist with the identification and preservation of ICH, and to train staff in its safeguarding.[9]

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[6] In Smith and Waterton's work there is a potential assumption revealed (on the part of interviewees, both English and international) that English views of intangible heritage are representative across the UK.

[7] See http://ichscotland.org/

[8] At a symposium hosted by MGS in 2015, participants suggested that Scotland should consider 'how to encourage investment in culture [which] encourage[s] diversity' (MGS 2015a, 8). Symposium attendees highlighted an over-emphasis on particular communities, noting that '[t]he varying cultures across Scotland are not equally supported' (ibid). Additionally, while specific initiatives seek to increase the visibility of ICH in Scotland, the practices of Scottish heritage professionals may have more in common with those in England.

[9] Inherent to the safeguarding of ICH within the Convention is the idea that state parties 'need to move away from the traditional top-down approach of governmental cultural heritage organisations' (Blake 2009, 65).

Sites of Struggle in Meaning-Making

As with wider heritage discourses, intangible cultural heritage narratives can be viewed as sites of struggle around meaning making. Seeking openings in the 'authorised heritage discourse' that as Smith has argued 'takes its clue from the grand narratives of Western national and elite class experiences, and reinforces ideas of innate cultural value tied to time depth, monumentality, expert knowledge and aesthetics' (2006, 299), is a clear political stance. However, the inclusion of ICH 'within the broader rubric of cultural heritage provides opportunities to democratise the process by which we give value to heritage, giving a larger role to local people' (Blake 2009, 46). In this, ICH can be seen as a tool for troubling the existing, dominant heritage discourses, potentially increasing both the number and register of voices represented. This utilisation of heritage as a tool for transformation of existing perceptions and normative structures is echoed within wider discourses in the UK surrounding museums and social justice (Museums Association 2013; O'Neill 2012; Sandell and Nightengale 2012; Bruce and Hollows 2007; Sandell 2006).

Such framings point towards emerging, blurred understandings for the construction of historical accounts which appear in a state of flux – constantly 'recreated' and/or reiterated. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblet has noted, 'While it looks old, heritage is actually something new. Heritage is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past' (1998, 7). The framing of heritage as a tool for re-visioning the present is echoed by the arguments of Kirshenblatt-Gimblet and others, specifically when considering heritage as an engaged practice (Lynch 2011, 2012), embodied action (Taylor 2003), or performative negotiation (Jackson and Kidd 2011).

Women in Protests at Waterfront Heritage Zones: A Performative Engagement with History

Acknowledging the increasing permeability of cultural institutions (as the producers of the authorised versions of heritage discourse) and using the adopted feminist-centred methodologies as a means of co-curating contents, the existing historical narratives of protests within the shipbuilding industry in Gdansk, Poland and Govan, Glasgow, Scotland have been challenged. Two public art-centred projects have co-produced 'alternative' heritage trails with local communities, each highlighting the importance of women's roles in socio-economic struggles. The projects created publicly accessible walks, discursive events, and supplemented historical records through blogs and publications – enabling collective know-how through embodied experience.

Diana Taylor's concept of the repertoire allows for an expansion of the traditional understanding of heritage, extending it into an embodied, participatory experience (2003, 19). Taylor argues that the repertoire allows for individual agency and requires presence, 'people participate in the production of knowledge by "being there," being a part of the transmission' (20). According to Taylor, 'the production of knowledge is always a collective effort, a series of back-and-forth conversations that produce multiple results' (xx). Knowledge is never singular; it is in constant transformation, inherently multifaceted and multi-vocal. In opposition to the supposedly stable objects in the archive or museum, the actions of the repertoire both retain and transform meaning – they do not remain the same (ibid). Similarly, Shannon Jackson (2011) suggests performance can be used to create openings, revealing existing hierarchies and underlying institutional structures. With this lens, we may usefully consider the embodied action of ICH as a method for creating openings and revealing existing hierarchies within dominant heritage narratives. The performative transmission

of ICH can also be considered a tool for creating new connections between distinct and/or disparate communities.

The creative projects examined in this paper focus on processes of walking and reinscribing the voices and histories of women, unsettling the existing historical records and creating openings for more nuanced, or even refracted narrative creation. In this way, these projects can be envisaged as prompts for the performing of recovered narratives of women in protests, engaging publics in a process of recovery and re-visioning of existing historical records (Beall 2016). The significance and strategic use of walking in both projects is also worth examining within the context of ICH and embodied performance. As described by Mike Pearson, walking can be envisaged as a spatial acting out, a type of performed narrative with specific paths and places of interest: 'This regular moving from one point to another is a kind of mapping, a reiteration of narrative understanding. Different paths enact different stories of action for which landscape acts as a mnemonic' (2010, 95).

Image 2

Anna Walentynowicz exhibition. Detail. BHP Hall, Gdansk, August 2015.

Photograph Katarzyna Kosmala

The Shipyard is a Woman

The history of the Gdansk Shipyard holds a key role in constructing the identity of the city, and for the majority of Gdansk citizens there is a connection through either family or acquaintances with the former shipbuilding industry. The shipyard also has an important place in the contemporary history of Poland and Europe. Post-war Gdansk became a place of resistance against the Communist regime, and central to this were the actions of shipyard workers. In August 1980 Anna Walentynowicz, a shipyard worker

and trade union activist, was fired. This contributed to the ignition of the strike at that shipyard, setting off a wave of strikes across Poland. In the same year, the Solidarity movement led by Lech Walesa was established at the shipyard's premises as the first independent trade union in the then Soviet Block, instigating the so-called Solidarity Revolution that subsequently led to systemic change across Central Europe. In June 2004, historical boards with the 21 demands of the protesting shipyard workers were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List. The demands were issued on 17 August 1980, assembled by the Interfactory Strike Committee and then written on two large wooden boards and displayed at the shipyard's main entrance. The first demand concerned the right to create independent trade unions. Other demands outlined that the government should respect the constitutional rights and freedoms of workers, dismantling the privileges for the Polish United Workers' Party members and taking actions to improve the economic and working conditions of Polish citizens.

Ongoing urban regeneration processes around the shipyard have largely ignored issues of public participation in the formation of historical narratives, concerning both industrial shipbuilding, and what concerns this paper, the narratives of women in protest within the world-famous birthplace of Solidarity (Kosmala and Sebastyanski 2013). In the 35 years since these political protests occurred, the roles of women within them have been largely omitted from public discourse.

Image 3

European Solidarity Centre, Permanent Collection. Detail. 2015.
Photograph Katarzyna Kosmala

In such a framing, the project *Shipyard is a Woman* attempts to recover the memories and forgotten stories of women in the shipyards, and to pay tribute to those who until the project started, remained largely anonymous. Metropolitanka is an

umbrella term bringing together a cluster of activists, academics and artists working with the Institute of Gdansk City Culture and Arteria Association in Gdansk, as well as independently, examining women's roles in protests and their overall visibility in the dominant historical narrative of the Gdansk shipyard's heritage. From the very beginning of their work, the male-dominant image of the shipyard prevailed, despite the fact that approximately 30% of the employees of the shipyard were female (Miler and Ilczyszyn, 2015). Women were employed in a variety of positions; from production lines, support services, administration, to working with technologies and in construction.

Shipyard is a Woman revolves around the production of historical narratives associated with Polish women activists and workers in the former Gdansk Shipyard involved in Solidarity-centred protests as well as women artists of the 'Artists' Colony' who since 2002 have become engaged with protecting the shipyard heritage. Anna Miler, one of the founders of Metropolitanka, and Head of Arteria Association, explains the genesis of the project:

> We began with interviewing people who worked there; women were especially interesting for us. We looked through photographs, films, and documents. We drew on all data to prepare three different sightseeing trails around the shipyard – 'S' route around the women in political protest in the 1980s, 'A' route – around women artists and art-centred activities and 'P' route around women employed at the shipyard (Miler and Ilczyszyn 2015).

Image 4

Shipyard is a Woman, Routes Map.
Courtesy of Metropolitanka

Since 2002, Metropolitanka has organised public walks in the former shipyards, around these three thematic trails, led by a volunteer guides. In addition, senior citizens of Gdansk, the shipyard's former employees, have joined the project in the role of

guides. Anna Miler explained that among the guides are Helena Dmochowska, a former crane operator in the shipyard. She was invited to take part in the project and share memories through her daughter who grew up listening to the stories of the shipyard's life. Senior citizens are an invaluable resource and have enriched the tours with their personal stories, as well as sharing pictures and old newspapers clippings. Miler added:

> We can reactivate the shipyard community and begin the discussion about the future of the area, ensuring the participation of the people who used to work in the area. Their memories can become an important part in the discussion about the shape the former shipyard might take in the future (ibid).

The project's methodology from the outset was rooted in the co-production of narratives with local publics. Three routes were constructed based on collated material and archival research as well as input from individuals who worked at the shipyard and their families. The map *Women Routes of Gdansk Shipyard,* outlining three thematic trails, is available online and as a printed leaflet. Guided walks as 'live' events both enact and trace connections between existing infrastructure, occasional displays and sublimated histories. The 'S' route takes place on the shipyard's premises, including walking around buildings associated with industrial action, while the 'S' narrative revolves around political heroines and their contribution to industrial action and protest.

Anna Walentynowicz, a crane operator fired for campaigning for employees' rights and working conditions during the strikes; Alina Pienkowska, a nurse employed in the shipyard clinic; and Ewa Ossowska, who among others jointly encouraged the shipyard workers to stay on the premises and engage in collective industrial action are all represented. In fact, Walentynowicz and Pienkowska served at the Headquarters of Inter-factory Strike Committee and were signatories of the Gdansk Agreement alongside Joanna Duda-Gwiazda, and Henryka Krzywonos.

Alina Pienkowska, who edited texts for the press agency of Free Trade Unions of the Coast, and Joanna Duda-Gwiazda, a graduate of Faculty of Ship Industrial Technology at the University of Gdansk, among others, co-authored the famous workers' postulates and influenced their final wording. Other women were also involved in the protests, including a typist Jadwiga Piątkowska and Maryla Plonska, a secretary who helped to organize a translation office for foreign media. Additionally, there were many anonymous women who supported the strike, for instance by organizing and distributing food, political leaflets and clothing among protesting workers (from the map: *Women Routes of Gdansk Shipyard*, Metropolitanka 2013).

Joanna Ilczyszyn of Metropolitanka explained that since the beginning of the project in 2002, over 2000 people have participated in the guided walks. Metropolitanka has also developed an audio guide, allowing visitors to wander around the shipyard year-round, to enable walks as an individually embodied connection with the shipyard's women, guided by the voices which are reinserted into the sites and spaces where they once were heard.

In March 2016, a mobile application that describes a trail around the premises with a smartphone or tablet was launched, alongside four podcasts about the jobs performed by women in the shipyard, describing working conditions and including a commentary on social and cultural aspects of employment at the shipyard. In addition, a digital archive containing old photographs, the project's documentation, interviews and stories of women linked to the shipyard was launched. But there remain problems with silences and omissions – there are still missing elements and gaps in constructed autobiographies, unspoken stories and confessions that were requested by those involved to not be made public. The ongoing process of recovery of sublimated voices and untold histories inherently troubles existing heritage narratives and adds complexity

to the intangible heritage of the shipyard and in particular histories of women in protest. There is also a question of reweaving of these histories back into heritage institutions responsible for 'authorised' heritage narratives of protests in the shipyard, including women in protests, in this case the European Solidarity Centre, and how such processes might involve a potential co-option of these histories.

Strong Women of the Clydeside: Protests and Suffragettes

The area of Glasgow known as Govan is world-renowned for shipbuilding, and like Gdansk, many Govanites claim some link to the industry. Although there remains only one working shipyard in Govan, local identities are often interwoven with the area's industrial past. Govan and Glasgow also have a proud history of labour and protest movements, and one of the most well-known is the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' 'Work-In'.

The Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (UCS) were created in 1968 through an amalgamation of the largest shipyards on the River Clyde in an attempt to make them more internationally competitive (University of Glasgow Archives 1976). Despite this and subsidies from the Labour government, the future of the yards remained uncertain, and in 1971 they went into receivership amidst great controversy (ibid). A Conservative government subsequently came into power and refused to lend additional support, although the shipyards had a full order book and were forecasted to be profitable into 1972 (ibid). Instead of striking, the unions opted to have a 'Work-In' to complete the orders in place and to demonstrate the viability of the yards (ibid). Public sympathy in Glasgow and beyond garnered organisers worldwide media attention and international donations, generating numerous fundraising concerts and public demonstrations (ibid). Amidst considerable public pressure, the UK government restructured the yards in 1972 and majority of the workers retained their jobs (ibid).

The UCS Work-In is an oft-cited example of a successful industrial action, and could be considered a seminal part of how Govan and Glasgow vision their industrial past. The roles of Union Shop Stewards Jimmy Reid, Jimmy Airlie, and other men who led the fight are well documented and fully ensconced in the wider historical narrative of Scotland's labour history.[10] In contrast, the roles of women working in the shipyards during the UCS Work-In are notable only by their absence from the prevailing historical record, and this was the starting point for *Strong Women of the Clydeside: Protests and Suffragettes.*[11]

In 2011, the Riverside Museum had relocated to Glasgow's waterfront, moving into an iconic building on the banks of the River Clyde.[12] Its new location placed it directly across the river from Govan, and facing one of the last working shipyards in Glasgow. *Strong Women of the Clydeside: Protests and Suffragettes* (hereafter SWaC) was one of four practice-based research projects initiated by Beall in 2013 to develop and map new engagement strategies, working in collaboration with the Riverside Museum and local publics. The project used socially-engaged and performative practices to co-curate events and activities which considered how underrepresented communities might be better represented within the museum. At the core of the project was a 12-member team,[13] tasked with researching the mainly hidden histories of women in protest movements in Govan, and considering how these histories might be more fully represented by, and connected with, displays in the Riverside Museum. The project team considered the role of women in three local protest movements: the 1915

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[10] Jimmy Reid was elected Rector of University of Glasgow in 1971, and his Rector's Address, 'Alienation' was printed in full by the New York Times (Wilson 2010). The Times declared it 'the greatest speech since President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address' (ibid).

[11] See https://govanshiddenhistories.wordpress.com/category/womens-history-protest-on-the-river-clyde/

[12] Riverside Museum is one of ten institutions that comprise Glasgow Museums. Riverside's new building was designed by Zaha Hadid (1950-2016) to echo the shape of shipyard sheds.

[13] In 2013 the team was comprised of an equal number of museum staff and local publics (from a range of organisations and groups) interested in women's histories. As the project has progressed this ratio has shifted: The 2017 team has nine members, but only one museum staff person.

Rent-Strikes, the 1971 UCS Work-In, and the 1996 Sit-In and community take-over of the Kinning Park Complex. This paper focuses on the UCS Work-In, and the lack of information available on women's involvement.

Image 5
Curator Heather Robertson speaking at the start of *SWaC* event 23.11.2013, in front of the Riverside Museum's UCS Work-In Banner display
Photograph by Alice Gordon courtesy tsBeall

From watching archival film footage of UCS Work-In protests (Cinema Action 1971, 1977), the SWaC team was aware that women marched alongside men in at least two demonstrations in Glasgow and London – but outwith this footage they found no mention of women's involvement in the historical records they accessed. The display on the UCS Work-In in the Riverside Museum (2011) reflects this dominant masculine narrative, portraying a complex and colourful industrial action, with a large banner and posters from fundraising concerts. There are no images of women working in the shipyards, and no substantive information on their involvement in the Work-In.[14] The museum's digital display contains 28 images from contemporary newspapers, depicting women exclusively as wives and daughters of the men involved.

In contrast, film footage from 1971 of UCS demonstrations shows groups of women marching together, holding placards and laughing (Cinema Action 1971). After watching this footage, the SWaC team suspected these women were groups of workers. The team was aware that roughly twenty years before, in other Govan shipyards,

[14] There is, however, one caption which quotes Isabelle Dickie, who worked in the 'UCS wages office at John Browns sorting cheques for the fighting fund' (Riverside Museum UCS banner display 2011). The caption seems unrelated to the image it describes, which depicts a line of men walking in front of a large shipyard building.

women comprised the majority of the workforce in specific departments like Tracing and Polishing[15] They suspected that this was also true within the UCS shipyards.

The SWaC team was determined to find women who were directly involved in the Work-In, to ask about women's involvement, and to provide evidence to counter the existing historical narrative. In 2015 they connected with Linda Hamill, and conducted and oral history interview with her. Linda was 16 years old when the Work-In began, employed by Fairfield Shipyards' Clerical Department. She told the SWaC team that

> there were women working [in the shipyard ...] they worked hard and they played hard and they knew how to speak. So they made sure their voice was heard that wasna heard by the press and the media, because as you know you never hear anything about the women in the shipyard it's always about the great men of the Clyde, you know what I mean?! So it doesna take rocket science [to know that] there must have been women there – and there *was* women there, in the different departments: the Tracing Department, Binding Department, Stock Control, up in the Drawing Office… but we just seem to be, we just seem to be left out (Hamill 2015).

Linda noted that although women were working in multiple departments in Fairfield Shipyard in 1971, and took part in protest demonstrations, their voices have been omitted from the dominant narratives about the UCS Work-In (ibid). This absence of women's roles within industrial histories is, according to Elspeth King, fairly commonplace: 'In Scotland, labour history has a particularly macho image, and usually ignores any form of feminism as bourgeois deviation. Often, labour history is only the history of men' (1985).

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[15] See for example *The Shipbuilders*, which includes an image of the Polishing Shop at Stephen's yard in 1950, depicting a room full of eight or nine female employees. The caption suggests 'one of the few jobs women did in the shipyards was French polishing' (Bellamy 2001, 23). The SWaC team has problematized Bellamy's assertion that this was unique to Polishing, providing evidence of women working in other shipyard departments.

The SWaC team began documenting gaps in the existing historical records, moving from news clippings, books, and archival research towards first person accounts and oral histories whenever possible.[16] Led by the information they gathered discursively from women who were involved, the team then re-examined archival records, hoping to finding evidence of women's involvement – with some success (see image 6). As the project developed, the team began to speak of their work as a recovery process: They discovered not gaps in the dominant heritage narrative, but chasms – the utter absence of women's voices or stories within the prevailing historical records, punctuated by (often overlooked) fragments of information.[17]

Image 6
Image recovered in the Mitchell Library Archives by SWaC team member Ian McCracken in 2015. It depicts two women speaking at what appears to be a 1971 UCS Work-In 'open air' organisational meeting.
Courtesy Glasgow Museums and Libraries Collection: Glasgow City Archives

Between 2013-2016 the SWaC team devised and hosted several performative walks connecting the Riverside Museum and the Govan riverside. Described as 'guided walks and public art actions', the events highlighted the contributions of numerous 'Strong Women of the Clydeside'. The walks began at the UCS banner display in the Riverside, travelled across the River Clyde by ferry into Govan, and ended at Fairfield Shipyard (site of the UCS Work-In, and a new heritage centre).[18] In 2015 and 2016, the team was joined by two UCS veterans, Betty Kennedy and Linda Hamill. Linda spoke about her role in the Work-In, her memories of marching, and her pride in the fact that the shipyard is still open today. Betty shared stories of working as a telephone operator,

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[16] In addition to the interview of Linda Hamill in 2015, the SWaC team has conducted other oral histories, which in 2017 will be accessioned into the Glasgow Women's Library.

[17] The team has continued to focus on archival recovery, and has recently found much to counter currently accepted narratives regarding women's employment within Glasgow's shipyards between 1914-1980. This will be explored in future publications.

[18] See http://www.fairfieldgovan.co.uk/heritage/

keeping the phone lines of Fairfield open 'no mater what' (Kennedy 2015). With the involvement of Linda and Betty, SWaC's performative walks create space for the re-voicing of lost stories, and the honouring of women's actions. Their voices ring out alongside existing heritage narratives in the Riverside Museum, and in and around the shipyard where they once laboured.

In devising these performative events, the SWaC team intended to walk in the footsteps of the women they were honouring – connecting these internationally important histories to Govan's contemporary buildings and spaces. As much as possible the walks quote women directly, speaking as (not for) them, or quoting descriptions of those who knew them first-hand.[19] During these events, the team renames streets to honour different 'Strong Women of the Clydeside' (using temporary chalk paint and stencils), and employs tools from more recent protest movements like Occupy – amplifying their voices by 'human megaphone', and claiming ground with temporary graffiti.[20] Laurajane Smith describes 'heritage work' as a way of 'reusing, reshaping, and recreating memories and knowledge to help us make sense of and understand not only who we are, but who we want to be' (2006, x). The walks are designed to inscribe and contextualise these women and their past actions within a present landscape, and within the context of the Riverside Museum – even if these histories are incomplete, fractured, and at times oppositional. In all, the SWaC project seeks to reinsert and reinsist women's voices in the Riverside Museum, in Govan's shipyards, and to connect the landscape in between. Through walking, this connection is embodied by all those

[19] For example, when speaking about Suffragette and Rent Strike organiser Helen Crawfurd, the SWaC team shared descriptions of Helen as remembered by her great grand-nephew, Jim Jack, from an oral history conducted by SWaC in 07.07.2015.

[20] The human megaphone is used to amplify the human voice without a public address system. It was used by the Occupy Movement in Zuccotti Park in 2011 to address large gatherings without electronic amplification.

participating in the event; it is a rethreading of recovered voices, presenting fragments of (sometimes) oppositional or 'meanwhile' narratives.

Image 7

Intervention by Lydia Levett in front of Sir William Pearce statue, Govan, Glasgow. Chalk reads, 'His wife was pure deid brilliant', *SWaC* event 15.08.2015
Photograph Jean Pierre Saint-Martin courtesy tsBeall

Conclusions

We argue the creative projects discussed in this paper occupy spaces of in-between, conceptualised here as spaces of resistance, unsettling the existing historical narratives of political protests and industry through recovering, recording and mapping omitted gendered accounts. As events which occur alongside the dominant historical timeline or discourse, these ephemeral, public art-centred works-as-actions both offer and become sites for the construction of new narratives. We argue that they operate not in direct opposition to dominant narratives but fluidly alongside, sometimes interwoven and sometimes in contrast. These projects both create and offer themselves as sites for re-memorialising, reinserting, and honouring – and in so doing they attempt a subtle rethreading of recovered voices into existing histories. Active participation in the walks exposes the public to recovered, reconstructed accounts of protests and individual subjectivities through them. At the same time, the participant as active agent experiences a shift or slippage between intimate experience and the public realm. This method of performative walking frames a process of 'becoming' through everyday tactics, echoing Judith Butler's framing of identity instituted through a 'stylized repetition of acts' (1988, 519). These stylised repetitions through walking, alongside processes of reinserting, honouring, renaming and attributing the role of women in protests accumulate 'in the doing' and result in the appearance of new narratives – morphing into re-written records of the past. These emergent narratives are sometimes

oppositional (counter narratives), but more frequently occur alongside existing, authorised discourses. They are 'meanwhile narratives' – unnoticed by dominant discourses and undertheorised within both museology and contemporary art practice.

UNESCO's definition of intangible heritage as 'oral expressions' and 'social practices' (2003 Article 2.2) which are 'transmitted' and 'constantly recreated' (Article 2.3) is interesting when examined alongside the processes of contemporary creative projects that focus on the recovery and reinvigoration of subaltern voices, including the histories of women in protest movements. As public actions which reinvigorate oral expressions, these projects can be seen as part of the process of transmitting women's voices from one generation to the next – quite literally in some instances, where women working in shipyards share their experiences first-hand. In the actions of retracing the steps of others, re-embodying their movements and reciting their words, these projects can be seen as an expansion of the conceptualisation of safeguarding present in the 2003 Convention, recovering and re-weaving women's stories into historical accounts, and subsequently, collective consciousness within the context of the dominant heritage discourses.

What emerges from this paper is also reflection on how these projects engage with the current conceptualisations of ICH, raising questions as to whether the oral traditions, expressions, and social practices surrounding industrial actions and other protest movements – and the creative practices which attempt to reinscribe them – might themselves be considered as expanded forms of intangible cultural heritage, and more work is needed to further problematise this.[21] We suggest that feminist-inspired methodologies for uncovering women's histories can allow for the transmission of knowledge about the past, and ideas that had currency in the past, to recirculate and

[21] This also extends to industrial craftsmanship.

refract in the present. Furthermore, a feminist turn applied to intangible heritage is envisaged here as aligned to the renewal and adaptation of everyday practices, such as consciousness raising, campaigning, or the promotion of more co-operative structures for heritage discourse.

We argue that narratives of protests and their gendered accounts on the Clydeside and in the Gdansk shipyard become simultaneous spaces of resistance, revealing richer and more hybrid articulations of intangible, fluid histories, alongside the existing historical records. Within both projects, a process of working with sublimated narratives and recovering forgotten voices has successfully acknowledged silences – and gaps – in the construction of heritage discourses.

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